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Draft ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the eleventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests

International arrangement on "The forests we want: beyond 2015"

We, the Ministers responsible for forests, gathered at the high-level segment of the eleventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, have adopted the following declaration:

1. We stress the vital role and significant contribution of all types of forests and of trees outside forests in achieving sustainable development including economic development, social development and environmental protection;

2. We also stress that over 1.6 billion people depend on forests for subsistence, livelihoods, employment and income generation and recognize that forests provide a wide range of goods and services, which create opportunities to address many of the most pressing sustainable development challenges;

3. We underscore that forests and sustainable forest management provide multiple benefits for the lives and well-being of people across the planet, recognizing the importance of living well in harmony with nature;

4. We reaffirm our strong commitment to forests and the sustainable management of all types of forests. The sustainable management of all types of forests is vital to facilitate transformative change and address major challenges, such as poverty eradication, economic growth and sustainable livelihoods, food security and nutrition, gender equality, cultural and spiritual values, health, water, energy production, climate change mitigation and adaptation, combating desertification, reduction of dust and sand storms, biodiversity conservation, sustainable soil and land management, watershed protection and disaster risk reduction;

5. We are deeply concerned about the continued deforestation and degradation of forests in many regions and underscore the need to reverse this trend;

6. We stress the need to continue to promote a common understanding of the concept of sustainable forest management and to continue to cooperate internationally and bilaterally to promote sustainable forest management and

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address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, including by strengthening forest governance through, inter alia, promoting secure land tenure rights and stakeholders' participation;

7. We welcome efforts by countries and stakeholders to advance the sustainable management of all types of forests, including the role of collective action by indigenous and local communities and community-based sustainable forest management;

8. We also underscore the essential role of major groups and other stakeholders in achieving the global objectives on forests;

9. We recognize that the United Nations Forum on Forests, with its universal membership and comprehensive mandate, plays a vital role in addressing challenges and issues relating to forests in a holistic and integrated manner and in promoting policy coordination and cooperation to achieve the sustainable management of all types of forests and trees outside of forests. We encourage other forest-related forums, initiatives and processes to cooperate with the Forum to achieve sustainable forest management;

10. We recognize the value of the Forum as a policy forum for the promotion of sustainable forest management and decide on the continuation of the international arrangement on forests, emphasizing the need to use the potential of the Forum efficiently and to contribute to cooperation and synergies;

11. We welcome forest-related developments in other forums, in particular the Rio Conventions,[1] their continued contribution to sustainable forest management and the importance of cooperation and synergies between these forums and the international arrangement on forests;

12. We affirm that the international arrangement on forests beyond 2015 should play a key role in promoting the achievement of forest-related sustainable development goals and targets that will be considered for adoption at the United Nations summit in September 2015;

13. We underscore the need to accelerate efforts at all levels to achieve the objectives of the international arrangement on forests beyond 2015 and the need to establish a stronger, more effective and solid arrangement for the period 2015 to 2030;

14. We, the Ministers responsible for forests commit ourselves:

(a) To implement sustainable forest management as defined in the non-legally-binding instrument on all types of forests, taking into account different visions, approaches, models and tools, including by strengthening the implementation of the non-legally-binding instrument on all types of forests and by taking action at national, subregional, regional and global levels to achieve the global objectives on forests;

(b) To affirm our commitment to a stronger and more effective post-2015 international arrangement on forests with a view to providing leadership to promote the vital significance of forests in the global sustainable development agenda, enhancing implementation of sustainable forest management, advancing forest policy dialogue, including with major groups, and fostering collaboration,

[1] The United Nations Convention of Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

cooperation and synergies across all forest-related organizations, conventions and other processes;

(c) To promote the integration of sustainable forest management and the commitments contained in the non-legally-binding instrument on all types of forests into our poverty reduction strategies, national sustainable development strategies and sectoral policies, and its synergistic implementation with other forest-related initiatives;

(d) To support the work of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests as a strategy for improving coherence and synergy on forest issues at all levels and to promote the integration of sustainable forest management into the strategies and programmes of the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership, as appropriate;

(e) To adopt cross-sectoral approaches and foster collaboration to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in a coherent and coordinated way and to increase the valuation and recognition of the full value of forest goods and services;

(f) To review and, as needed, in accordance with national legislation, policies and priorities, improve forest-related legislation, strengthen forest law enforcement and promote good governance at all levels in order to support sustainable forest management, create an enabling environment for forest investment and combat and eradicate illegal practices, as well as to promote secure land tenure;

(g) To continue to tackle deforestation and forest degradation and to promote the trade in forest products from sustainably managed and legally harvested forests;

(h) To promote the sustainable management of all types of forests, including by:

(i) Stressing the importance of mobilizing new and additional resources from all sources for the sustainable management of all types of forests and taking steps to enhance the ability of countries to access and effectively employ the forest-related funds, ensuring better coordination across the variety of existing and emerging forest financing instruments and mechanisms and the use of such financing in line with the principles of aid effectiveness;

(ii) Continuing to enhance capacity-building, including the development, transfer and dissemination of environmentally sound technology on mutually agreed terms;

(iii) Strengthening the international arrangement on forests and its components to ensure that they are able to perform their functions effectively;

(i) To strengthen coordination and collaboration on all issues relating to forests and to promote complementarity and coherence between the international arrangement on forests and other forest-related and cross-sectoral processes;

(j) To fully engage all stakeholders in the work of the international arrangement on forests;

(k) To strengthen national monitoring, assessment and reporting in countries and the ability of the international arrangement on forests to assist countries in this endeavour with regard to achieving the objectives of the international arrangement on forests, including implementing the non-legally-binding instrument on all types

of forests, the global objectives on forests and the achievement of forest-related sustainable development goals and targets which will be considered for adoption at the United Nations summit in September 2015;

15. We invite:

(a) The third International Conference on Financing for Development to give appropriate consideration to the issue of financing for forests and sustainable forest management as one of the priorities;

(b) Forum members, financing institutions and the private sector to aim to ensure that investments and development finance take appropriate account of the role of forests in poverty eradication and sustainable development and to give financing for sustainable forest management greater priority and increased relevance, including through the recognition of the public goods and services that forests deliver;

(c) The Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to consider the importance of forests and sustainable forest management in both climate change mitigation and adaptation, consistent with its mandate;

(d) The Conferences of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to consider outputs of the future international arrangement on forests, consistent with their mandates, and also invite their secretariats to continue to actively participate, as appropriate, in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests as well as to continue their involvement in the work of the Forum and the Partnership;

(e) The existing and emerging forest-related financing initiatives, including the Global Environment Facility and the Green Climate Fund, to support the implementation of sustainable forest management, consistent with their mandates;

(f) The above-mentioned forums and conferences and the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda to consider the present declaration to be the contribution of the Forum to the outcomes of those events, and in this regard request the Secretary-General to officially submit this declaration to those entities;

16. We resolve to meet again to further strengthen the Forum, to review progress on the implementation of the post-2015 international arrangement on forests and to explore options to further strengthen sustainable forest management at all levels.